

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to read as follows (added matter is underlined and omitted matter is in brackets):

1. (currently amended) System for withdrawing liquid, in particular water, from a soil area, such as for consolidating it, comprising a series of spaced apart ~~draining means~~ drains extending downwardly, in particular substantially vertically, in the soil and a substantially horizontally extending drainage line, which is arranged in the soil for receipt of the soil fluid passed through the downwardly extending ~~drainage means~~ drains and which in a transitional area in a border area of the soil area to be treated, such as to be consolidated, changes into a pump line which leads to a pump positioned outside of the soil area to be treated, an oversize of line length being provided in the transitional area prior to making the system operational, the oversize being designed as a slide connection with an overlap between two line ends that are inserted into each other.

2. (original) System according to claim 1, the oversize having at least a length which at a minimum is adjusted to the expected settlement.

3. (currently amended) System according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, the transitional area being situated near the outermost downwardly extending ~~drainage means~~ drains.

4. (currently amended) System according to claim 1, ~~2 or 3~~, the line ends being formed by a discharge end of the drainage line and a receiving end of the pump line, which at the location of the slide connection can be slid into each other and forming an overlap at that location.

5. (original) System according to claim 4, the receiving end of the pump line being slidably accommodated in the discharge end of the drainage line.

6. (currently amended) System according to claim 4 ~~or 5~~, the slide connection comprising a sleeve part and a clamping part for securing the discharge end of the drainage line to the sleeve part by clamping about it, the sleeve part slidably holding the receiving end of the pump line.

7. (original) System according to claim 6, a sealing being arranged between the sleeve part and the receiving end of the pump line.

8. (currently amended) System according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, the slide connection being provided with a limiter which is active in the

direction of mutual approach of the discharge end of the drainage line and the receiving end of the pump line.

9. (currently amended) System according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, the discharge end being detachably attached to the end of a drainage line, such as by means of a snap connection.

10. (original) System according to claim 9, the slide connection being accommodated within a sleeve that is part of the discharge end.

11. (currently amended) System according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the downwardly extending ~~drainage means~~ drains are elongated and spaced from each other.

12. (currently amended) System according to claim 11, wherein the downwardly extending ~~drainage means~~ drains are formed by drainage strips/ribbons.

13. (currently amended) System according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the horizontal extending drainage line is covered by an air sealing layer.

14. (currently amended) Assembly for withdrawing liquid, in particular water, from a soil area for consolidating it, comprising a number of systems according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, which each are connected to a central pump with their own pump line.

15. (currently amended) Assembly for withdrawing liquid, in particular water, from a soil area for removing substances from the soil area, comprising a number of systems according to ~~any one of the claims 1-13~~ claim 1, which each are connected to a central pump with their own pump line.

16. (currently amended) System for withdrawing liquid, in particular water from a soil area, ~~provided with one or more of the characterising measures described in the attached description and/or shown in the attached drawings~~ such as for consolidating it, comprising a series of spaced apart drains extending downwardly, in particular substantially vertically, in the soil and a substantially horizontally extending drainage line, which is arranged in the soil for receipt of the soil fluid passed through the downwardly extending drains and which in a transitional area in a border area of the soil area to be treated, such as to be consolidated, changes into a pump line which leads to a pump positioned outside of the soil area to be treated, an oversize of line length being provided in the transitional area prior to making the system operational.

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17. (New) System according to claim 16, the oversize being designed as a slide connection with an overlap between two line ends that are inserted into each other.